



MEETING OF THE CITY OF RIDGECREST INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
1ST FLOOR CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM AREA B
Thursday September 17, 2015 at 5:00 pm

Committee Members: Chair Mike Mower, Vice Chair Matt Baudhuin
Vice Mayor James Sanders Planning Commissions Warren Cox
Staff: Dennis Speer, Loren Culp
Recording Secretary: Karen Harker

APPROVED MINUTES
Meeting – 5:00 p.m.

This meeting room is wheelchair accessible. Accommodations and access to City meetings for people with other handicaps may be requested of the City Clerk (499-5002) five working days in advance of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER Meeting was called to order at 5:00

ROLL CALL: Mayor Peggy Breeden Vice Chair Matt Baudhuin, Planning Commissioner, Warren Cox

Absent: Chair Mike Mower, Mayor Pro Tem James Sanders
Staff: Dennis Speer, Public Works Director; Loren Culp, City Engineer
Recording Secretary: Karen Harker

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: *Motion To Approve the Agenda Was Made By Commissioner Mr. Cox, Seconded by Mr. Baudhuin. Motion Carried By Voice Vote of 3 Ayes (Baudhuin, Breeden, Cox) 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Sanders, Mower) 0 Abstain*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Motion To Approve the Minutes of August 20, 2015 was Made By Commissioner Cox, seconded by Mayor Breeden. Motion Carried By Voice Vote of 3 Ayes (Baudhuin, Breeden, Cox) 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Sanders, Mower) 0 Abstain*

PUBLIC COMMENT OF ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public Comment Open 5:05

David Matthew: Asked if we still had a pothole machine. He is concerned about several areas: 1) Felspar Street and Sierra View Avenue 2) Felspar Street and Sherri Court. He can't remember the other streets but will contact the Public Works Department and give them to either Mr. Speer or Karen Harker.

Mike Neel – Would like to discuss the bulb outs on West Ridgecrest Blvd. I have been asking that they be removed from Sanders Street and Alvord Avenue. They are a hazard to pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles making turns from these streets. I have video tape the area and feel that someone is going to be injured or maimed and is this what it's going to take to have the City realize that the bulb outs need to be removed. I would like for this item to be placed on the City Council Agenda.

- **Dave Matthew** – I had a bicyclists going the wrong direction coming towards me and I had to move out of the way or else I was going to hit him.
- **Commissioner Cox** – doesn't this issue need to go before the Planning Commission prior to going before City Council to do the fact that the Old Town Committee participated in the process of the corridor.
- **Mr. Speer** – this was a beautification project from the Old Town Committee: bulb outs, crosswalks, truck traffic. The original project was strictly a street project and members of the area wanted to see the beautification process. I agree with Commissioner Cox that it needs to go before the Planning Commission before going to the City Council
- **Commissioner Cox** – I feel that we need to get the participants who were active in the Old Town Committee to come to the meeting so they can explain the reasoning behind the bulb outs, crosswalks.
- **Mayor Breeden** – A lot of those members were business owners that no longer have businesses on the corridor. It might be hard to find them.
- **Mr. Culp** – cautioned the committee that these are federal funds and can potentially has funds returned if we have the bulb outs removed.
 - Mr. Speer indicated that if it was deemed as a safety hazard they might see it in everyone's best interest.
 - Mayor Breeden – several were already taken out without any consequences.
 - Mr. Culp- only one by the Drive Thru Dairy

Chair Baudhuin recommended that this be placed on the Planning Commission Agenda for October as it is too soon for the September Agenda

Ms. Merk – Recently at a Senior Health Conference it was discussed that the City Buses are unable to drive into the parking lot to drop off the riders. It was mentioned that the buses couldn't make the turn at the end of the parking lot. I was wondering if the City had known about this and if there was anything done about it.

- Mr. Speer – Last year the Transit Coordinator volunteered to purchase a shuttle in the sum of \$11,000 to \$13,000 and when we contacted the county to find out who they would be providing as a driver, they indicated that they wouldn't be doing that. Our buses are unable to make that turn right now as it sits with the currant stripping. We would have to reduce and remove parking spaces and then re-stripe. The City has funding from the Community Development Block Grant to resurface the parking lot at the Senior Center but the funding for that could be years down the road. If we did this at this time, we would be duplicating the re-stripping.
- Commission Cox – I would like to see what the cost savings might be restriping the parking lot so that the buses can get through instead of purchasing a cart and I realize it would be redundant in restriping it when the paving get done but it seems to make more sense then to spend money on a golf cart.
- Mr. Speers- I can get you those numbers
- Dave Matthews – I think that taking a bulb out to give them more of a radius to turn would be a good idea.

Public Comment Closed at 5:23

DISCUSSION AND OTHER ACTION ITEMS

➤ Discuss Traffic Impact at the New Murray Middle School

Commissioner Cox discussed the background of the traffic impact at the New Murray Middle School and the meetings that had been held between the City and the Sierra Sands Unified School District (SSUSD). The bottom line comes down to the City has been told by the SSUSD they have no funding for the Traffic Impact around the new school area. The Traffic Impact Mitigation is the responsibility of the SSUSD and the City has had the City Engineer, Loren Culp, looking for funding to help with the School District. The SSUSD had a traffic engineer evaluate the traffic impacts and their engineer made a tear drop turnaround that turns onto Drummond Avenue. The City asked if there was a way that they could use Knox Road to access the Traffic Impact concerns and the District felt that this was not an option. Having all the traffic coming directly onto Drummond Avenue will cause safety issue that the City Engineer, Traffic Engineer and Traffic Sergeant from the Police Department is concerned about. There are several ways to address the situation 1) engineer a raised median, acceleration, deceleration lanes or 2) place a signal at the entrance that would control the flow of traffic. Option 1 would cost about 150K and option 2) the cost of a signal is around 250K. We could use TAB Funds from the City as a City infrastructure project and let the SSUSD know that this is only a loan due to the fact that it is ultimately their responsibility for the Traffic Impact Mitigation. Commissioner Cox recommended that we have a control intersection and to do this it would take putting in the traffic signal.

Vice Chair Baudhuin cited a legal precedent from San Diego that put the University of San Diego responsible for the Traffic Impact upon them and not the City. Vice Chair Baudhuin feels that safety is paramount in this situation. He also understands human behavior and that both kids and parents will push the envelope getting to and from school. He feels that even with a light that parents and kids will be crossing the 4 lanes road unless we have a raised median with a 4 foot fence for determent. With a traffic signal you will have the turn lane that will have that one parent who thinks that they can make it into the tear drop and they have part of their car in the roadway and the cars trying to make the left into the tear drop heading west can now not move in and we have a backup problem on Drummond Avenue that could potentially effect even French Avenue.

Mr. Speer was asked if TAB Funding could be used for this type of project; loan to SSUSD and is there and precedent?

- Mr. Speer – this would be a precedent. The City has not done this type of project before. What Commissioner Cox has suggested is that we would make it a City Infrastructure Project and then have an agreement with SSUSD about the pay back of funding. I would need to check with the Bond Council to make sure that this is an appropriate project to do before proceeding forward.

Vice Chair Baudhuin would rather see TAB Funding being used for a safety project than any other project. He feels that this is a project that must be done for our community and the safety of our children.

Sergeant Myers was asked to speak about the project. Sergeant Myers first wanted to know if there was anything that the SSUSD had modified to the design of the school. He asked about the new track and baseball fields. Commissioner Cox indicated that these items had been pulled from the design and would not be built but were there on the architect plans for future projects. Sergeant Myers feels strongly that we do not want to lose the project. This project is very important to the community. He feels that Mr. Bell has been completely honest about the funding needs in regards to the Traffic Impact Mitigation. Everyone (City Officials and SSUSD Officials) were on board with the traffic issues and agreed that there was a problem out on Drummond Avenue that needed to be addressed. It wasn't until their traffic engineer made his recommendation. He likes the idea of k-rails and a fence on top of the k-rails. This would certainly discourage pedestrians from crossing the area from the curve in Drummond Avenue almost all the way down to French. The enforcement of what happens out in this corridor has fallen to the Police Department/Traffic Division and if you just take a look at what has transpired out at the Charter School over the last couple of years you can see if we don't have a good system in place to start with thing will become chaotic. I don't have the staffing to have enforcement out there every day to oversee what is going on when school begins and when school lets out. We must have something in writing that states they will stagger school start times. I know that we have this verbally but Department Heads change, City Councils change, School Boards change and this is vital for the Traffic Impact to work properly. Having Burroughs students and the New Murray Middle School students being dropped off and picked up at the same time would create traffic safety hazard to vehicles and students.

Commissioner Cox - What are your recommendations?

Sergeant Myer – I would like to see an acceleration lane and deceleration lane with stagger time for starting school and dismissal in writing. I'm in favor of k-rails with fencing and when funding is available raised curb medians with fencing.

The Committee wanted to hear from City Engineer, Loren Culp.

Loren Culp wanted to speak more to the funding aspect of the project. There were two options.

- Option 1) He had reached out to the Kern County Community Development Department (KCCDD) who administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is a federal HUD grant. SSUSD was asked to provide information to see if within the boundaries of their project if 51% were low to moderate income. SSUSD didn't quite meet that criterion. KCCDD did however, come back to SSUSD and indicated that if there student population of the school falls within the 51% they would be willing to accept a grant application. At first SSUSD didn't think that they would be able to come up with this information, but after evaluating they informed KCCDD that they were working on a way to possibly meet this criterion.

The draw back to this funding is that the process can be long. If they make application this year in December of FY 16-17, they would not be eligible to receive those funds until October of 2016. This is Federal Funding and they work off of the Federal calendar year.

- Option 2) which is less favorable, the City would use Regional Surface Transportation Program Funds that the City receives from Kern Cog for this project. Right now we have our application in to do the Widening of Downs Street from Ridgecrest Boulevard to Upjohn Avenue. I spoke with Kern Cog and they indicated to me that the City could do an amendment to the application that is before them right now to a new project. This would mean however, that the City would pass a year of paving streets or doing a street capital improvement project.

Mr. Speer wanted the Committee to know at this point also that having Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) is the responsibility of the District. When he first came to the City he asked then City Engineer, Joe Pollock if the District had ever submitted a document that provided the City with a program for a SRTS for each of their schools. There was none on file. Since this time, Mr. Speer has had numerous meetings with the SSUSD and several with Mr. Bell himself letting him know the importance of this document so that we can continue to receive state and federal funding. The City has even referred a consultant to help with a program. The City still has not received a SRTS plan from the District.

Public Comment:

Dave Matthew – I know that they have been speaking about this new school for many years and they are not even thinking about using Knox road into Burroughs and they never went back and looked at it again.

- Commissioner Cox- as far as I know they had not looked at that option

Vice Chair Baudhuin felt that the committee needed to make a recommendation to the City Council and get this on the Agenda as soon as possible as time was very important to SSUSD. The question was 1) can we help or can we not help 2) what are we going to require of SSUSD. Mayor Breeden felt that it was important to ask for a meeting with Mr. Bell with this committee before the City Council Meeting to let him know what the Committee had come up with and see if this was something that he would be agreeable with.

It was decided that the ***Recommendation to City Council would be: an acceleration lane, a deceleration lane, with raised medians and a fence from curve to intersection of French.*** Staff will continue to evaluate the alternatives and if they have anything else will bring it to the City Council with the funding at that time.

Meanwhile, Staff will contact Mr. Bell on Monday September 21, 2015 to see if he is amicable with a special meeting of the Infrastructure Committee for Wednesday September 23, 2015 @ 4:00 pm.

➤ Follow- up SCE

Loren Culp, City Engineer gave out a handout describing to the Committee a rundown of what has happened with SCE. We have not received a response back for Notice to Owner #4 telling them to move their poles from our easement to proceed with the project. They did state that 1) we need to pay 100K 2) poles are 100% the Cities Responsibility 3) and that they can't have the engineering work done by our time frame.

Mr. Culp gave the pole exhibits and how the poles are located. We shared this information with SCE prior to the City starting the design work. SCE can do two things 1) acknowledge that the poles are in their easement and relocate the poles at their expense or 2) fight and state that the documents from 1964 show that the right of way was a survey line (imaginary) that went down the path. It still puts their poles in our easements.

The City believes that SCE wants to move forward with the Underground Utility District so the cost doesn't fall to them, they can just use the Rule 20A funds. This would leave the City without the Rule 20A funds for use in another area plus the postponement of the project. The Committee still wants to move forward.

Public Comment

Dave Matthews – SCE and the City for at least 20 years have had an Underground Utility District. Can someone explain why it is underground over in the business park? Mr. Speer explained the process of forming the underground utility district and also indicated that when doing subdivision it might be conditioned to have underground utilities.

➤ See Design Plans for Downs Street Widening Project

Mr. Culp presented the Design plans to the committee. There are three (3) design amendments 1) driveway for Mather dairy 2) conduit down the roadway 3) redo the tapers. No improvements for the medians they are strictly dirt. There is a crosswalk for the Ridgecrest Charter School. These are raised medians curb not the tack-on medians. We can have crosswalk signals and/or flashing beacons, but to do these items the cost drove the budget up in the last engineer's estimate, so I did eliminate them. Flashing beacons cost up to 15K. Mr. Culp didn't want to give an engineer's estimate because he had not had that to memory so as long as no one quoted him he was willing to state 2.2 million. Ms. Harker asked Mr. Culp if that was with the moving of the poles or not. He thought that was with the moving of the poles as he had asked the design engineer for worst case scenario. We might be well below that if we don't have to move the poles.

Mr. Culp discussed the ingress and egress of Mather Dairy as they are unable to access their property from Ridgecrest Boulevard due to the 6,000lb limit. The engineers of record have been working with them to make sure that they have plenty of access to their place of business.

➤ Drop in water usage for the City

Dennis gave a handout regarding the Wastewater Influent at the plant. He discussed that we are at 60% capacity and when Mr. Speer first got here we were at 71% to 72%. When

you are at that percentage the Regional Water Board will issue a notice that you need to proceed with planning a new plant which is what happened in 2010 and why the City moved forward with a City Advisor. The City was looking ahead at BRAC and if that had happened we would have reached our capacity. Now you can see with the community being more conservative with water usage this number has gone down.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

SUPPORT STAFF COMMENTS

Loren Culp: Staff had a meeting with the Walmart contractor, 11 Western Builders. To do the pad for the new Walmart, they will need to take dirt from the Bowman Channel. This will cause for a complete road closure of Bowman Road. I have instructed them to contact all local agencies regarding the road closure (police, fire, ambulance, SSUSD, Transit, new media). As for the intersection at China Lake Avenue and Bowman Road they will be doing half the work at a time and keeping the remainder of the intersection open. We are working closely on detour routes for all traffic.

Public Comment:

Dave Matthew – why completely close Bowman Road.

- Mr. Culp indicated that there will be large dump trucks and earth scrapper and equipment moving very fast. They will be able to get the job done much faster by closing the road.

Ms. Merk - What are your alternative truck routes

- We are looking at detour routes – College Heights, To Dolphin – Gateway Avenue or Richmond Road.

Ms. Merk – can these roads handle this sort of traffic

- Mr. Culp – we are in the preliminary stages and we will be working with Kern County to make sure that we have the proper encroachment permits and have the County on board.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- SCE Update
- Update on New Murray Middle School

NEXT MEETING:

- Possible Special meeting September 23, 2015 @ 4:00 pm
- October 15, 2015

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 7:35